

REMARKS

Summary

The Abstract, the disclosure, and Claims 1, 2, 4, and 7-9 have been amended to overcome formal objections thereto and independent Claims 1 and 7 have been amended to include features of allowable Claim 3. Therefore, the application is now in allowable form.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1, 2, 4 and 6-9 are pending, with Claims 1 and 7 being independent. Claims 1, 2, 4, and 6-9 have been amended to overcome a formal objection thereto and Claims 1 and 7 have been amended to include features of allowable Claim 3. Claims 3 and 5 have been cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein.

Requested Action

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the outstanding objections and rejection in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Specification and Claim Objections

The Examiner objects to the phrase “nonwoven-fabric” in the Abstract, the disclosure, and Claims 1-5 and 7-9. In response, while not conceding the propriety of the objection, Applicants have changed this phrase to --non-woven fabric--, as suggested by the Examiner, in the Abstract, the specification, and Claims 1, 2, 4, and 7-9, and canceled Claims 3 and 5 without

prejudice, thereby obviating the objections. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the objections to the specification and claims now be withdrawn.

Specification and Claim Amendments

Applicants have also amended the specification and claims for reasons unrelated to patentability to improve their form.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication that dependent Claims 3, 5, 6, 8, and 9 contain allowable subject matter. In response, Applicants have incorporated the features of allowable Claim 3 into independent Claims 1 and 7 and canceled Claim 3.

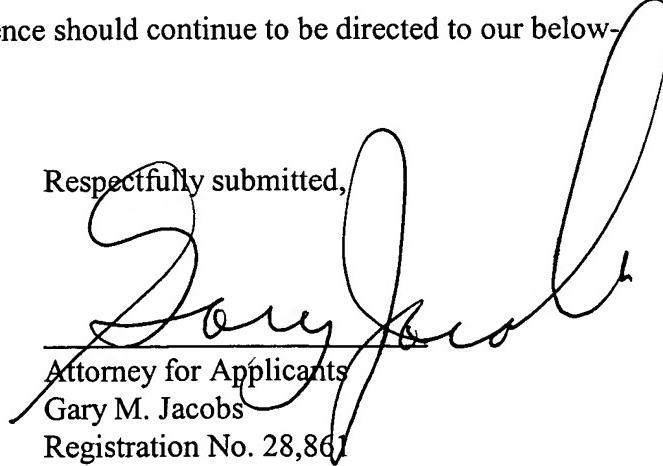
Substantive Rejection

Claims 1, 2, 4, and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,901,228 (Kamimura et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,705,447 (Kubo).

In response, while not conceding the propriety of the rejection, independent Claims 1 and 7 have been amended to include the features of allowable Claim 3. Therefore, both the independent claims and the dependent claims are now in allowable form. Therefore, early passage to issue is respectfully solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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